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The reason why

By Wolf Blitzer
Special to the Globe

PETERSBURG, Va. - Why did Jonathan Jay Pollard spy for Israel?

During two lengthy interviews at the federal prison here, he strongly denied that it was because of the money he received from his Israeli handlers - some, \$50,000 over an 18-month period.

"I had never envisioned my motives as having a pecuniary aspect," he said. "After all, for the ton of information I provided, how much money would a mercenary have asked for? I don't have cars. I don't have houses. I don't have a drug habit. I don't have household possessions that would indicate a mercenary's attitude toward this affair."

As a civilian intelligence analyst for the US Navy, he said he came across "horrifying" threats facing Israel which the US government was not officially sharing with Israel.

"There are two realities," he said. "There's the reality of the intelligence analyst and there's the reality of Joe Citizen on the street. And if I were scared for Israel's survival when I was Joe Citizen on the street, not being fully aware of the true nature of the threat to Israel ... then being immersed in that kind of environment in the intelligence community exacerbated my concern."

He further defended his decision to spy for Israel by saying that a stronger, more confident Israel would in the long-run also serve US interests.

"Israel, as we know, is an ally of the

United States," he said. "Perhaps not in the same way as NATO - thank God - because Israel is what I consider to be a more responsible ally. It presents a forward beachhead for American interests and power in the region; it contributes significantly to our own intelligence effort, our weapons development programs, as well as our strategic reach; and is a sister democracy, the only one in that stretch of territory from the Atlantic Coast of Morocco all the way over to the border of India. ... While I admit that Israel has interests that diverge perhaps from those of the United States, that diversion is one of degree not substance, not of real substance."

Pollard said the information he provided offered Israel "a glimpse into the future." He said it represented "the difference between a repetition of the 1973 war, which is what I consider to be a technological Pearl Harbor for Israel, and a 1967 [Six-Day] war. Those are poles apart."

But he conceded that he broke the law. "I'm not mincing words. I broke the law. I never considered myself above the law. Unfortunately, I should have gone on aliya [emigration to Israel] at that point - when my ability to discharge my functions as a member of the American intelligence community became incompatible with my emotional need to do something for Israel."

He also feels that his actions have saved Jewish lives. "If nothing else," he said, "an Israeli boy or girl is going to be saved. However, here I am, rotting."

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